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## **FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS 2021**

# **COLUMBIA FIRE DEPARTMENT FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS 2021**

Job Announcement

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# *Columbia Fire Department*

## OFFICE OF THE FIRE CHIEF

### **Operational Bulletin: PER- 9**



Date Issued: 04/15/2008  
Date Reviewed: 12/21/2017  
Revision Date: 07/02/2020  
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**SUBJECT: PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

#### **I. PURPOSE:**

In order to present a uniform and professional appearance to our customers, this policy on personal appearance establishes requirements for Uniformed Fire Department employees while they are on duty and/or representing the Department.

#### **II. GENERAL:**

A. All Fire Department employees are required to maintain a neat, clean, and professional personal appearance while on duty and/or representing the Department.

B. The following basic guidelines have been established to address the goal of presenting a uniform and professional appearance to our customers. However, due to the unlimited possibilities involving personal appearance, this policy is not all inclusive.

C. All issues related to personal appearance not specifically covered in this policy are to be handled on a case by case basis using the department's goals as the standard to judge the acceptability of personal appearance. Employees are to confer with their supervisor prior to any anticipated altering of their personal appearance in a way that may not meet the department's goals.

### III. POLICY:

#### A. Uniforms and other Department issued apparel:

- (1) While on duty and/or representing the Department, personnel are to be in the proper uniform or apparel as identified in EQP-1.
- (2) Uniforms and apparel are to fit properly, be clean, neat, and presentable. The patches on the sleeve(s) are not to be faded.
- (3) Uniform shirts are to be worn with only the top button unfastened when not wearing a tie. All buttons are to be fastened when wearing a tie.
- (4) The sleeves of uniform shirts are not to be "rolled up".

#### B. Jewelry

- (1) No visible earrings, neck chains, necklaces, or bracelets are to be worn while on-duty and/or representing the Department. Exception: a Medical alert bracelet and/or one wristwatch (time-keeping device) is allowed.
- (2) One ring per hand is allowed. (Engagement and wedding band will be considered as one ring). The ring shall not be of a style that would permit a safety hazard or interfere with the wearing of PPE.
- (3) Visible wearing of jewelry associated with body piercing is prohibited; this includes tongue jewelry.
- (4) Any jewelry that may interfere with an employee's ability to perform their assigned duties, is a safety hazard to the employee or customer, or is departmentally unacceptable is prohibited.

#### C. Hair is to be worn in contemporary styles within the following guidelines:

- (1) Non natural hair colors are prohibited, i.e. green, purple, etc.
- (2) Sideburns are not to extend below the bottom of the ear and not be

- more than one (1) inch wide.
- (4) Employees are to be clean shaven with the exception of mustaches. Mustaches are to be neatly trimmed and lower lip must be visible with the mouth closed. Mustaches must be within the boundaries set in the picture below. Mustaches cannot interfere with the use of SCBA or N95 mask.
  - (5) Hairstyles that may interfere with an employee's ability to perform their assigned duties, is a safety hazard to the employee or customer, or is departmentally unacceptable are prohibited.

#### D. Tattoos

The following types of tattoos or brands are prohibited:

- (1) Tattoos or brands affiliated with, depicting, or symbolizing extremist philosophies, organizations, or activities. Extremist philosophies, organizations, and activities are those which advocate racial, gender, or ethnic hatred or intolerance; advocate, create, or engage in illegal discrimination based on race, color, gender, ethnicity, religion, or national origin; or advocate violence or other unlawful means of depriving individual rights under the U.S. Constitution, and Federal or State law.
- (2) Indecent. Indecent tattoos or brands are those that are grossly offensive to modesty, decency, propriety, or professionalism.
- (3) Sexist. Sexist tattoos or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on gender.
- (4) Racist. Racist tattoos or brands are those that advocate a philosophy that degrades or demeans a person based on race, ethnicity, or national origin. Tattoos or brands, regardless of subject matter, are prohibited on the head, face (except for permanent makeup), neck (anything above the t-shirt neckline), and hands (below the wrist bone), except members may have one ring tattoo on each hand, below the joint of the bottom segment (portion closest to the palm) of the finger. Previously documented tattoos, for which CFD members have received approval, continue to be grandfathered.

#### E. Piercing

Body piercing (other than the piercing of the ears, not an ear ring) or alteration to any area of the body, that is visible to the public while representing the department, and is a deviation from normal anatomical features and is not medically required is prohibited. This prohibition does not include authorized medical alterations performed at a medical treatment facility or cosmetic, reconstructive, or plastic surgery procedures. Such body alteration includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (1) Tongue splitting or piercing
- (2) The complete or transdermal implantation of any material
- (3) Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose or teeth
- (4) Branding or scarification

#### F. Hygiene

- (1) Due to the nature of close working relationships with co-workers and our customers, a high level of personal hygiene practices shall be adhered to throughout the shift day.
- (2) Fragrances and cosmetics shall be worn conservatively with considerations given to fellow employees regarding allergies or known medical conditions.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS**

**The following information is intended to provide an overview of the testing processes of the Columbia Fire Department.**

**To become eligible for the firefighter selection process, candidates MUST be at least 21 years of age by the application deadline and apply by completing an online application through the City of Columbia Human Resources Department. The candidate must provide the following information by the application deadline listed on the Job Announcement:**

- . A completed on-line City employment application;**
- . A complete 200 word or more statement which describes why you want to be in the fire service and what preparations you have made toward a career in firefighting/public safety.**
- . If currently a licensed EMT, attach a copy of certification.**

**The firefighter examination process consists of two major areas:**

- . Physical ability testing**
- . Interview**

**You will be invited by e-mail and scheduled to participate in the physical ability testing by Human Resources. Your scheduled appointment will include the date, and time you are expected to participate.**

**The physical ability testing is conducted at the Columbia Fire Training Academy, 700 Big Bear Boulevard. Candidates are not to arrive more than ten (10) minutes prior to their scheduled time. However, failure to be on time will be grounds for elimination from the process. Parking is very limited at the Academy. Candidates should park their vehicles so as not to block any driveways of the Humane Society/Animal Shelter or area businesses.**

**Candidates who successfully complete the physical ability test process will be invited to interview. If you successfully complete the physical ability test process you will be notified by e-mail, after all the physical ability tests are completed, the location, date and time of your interview.**

**An eligibility roster will be formulated from the aforementioned processes. Only those candidates who have successfully completed all phases of the testing process will be eligible for this roster.**

**All hiring for the Columbia Fire Department is from the established eligibility roster. Candidates on the eligibility roster may be invited to an interview with the Fire Chief of the Columbia Fire Department.**

**All hiring is contingent upon successful completion of a physical examination, drug testing, and background investigation.**

**Please take time to carefully review all of the information in this package. Should you have any unanswered questions, contact the City of Columbia Human Resources Department at 573-874-7235.**

**Thank you for your interest in a career with the Columbia Fire Department.**



**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**  
**2020 FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS**

**I. PHYSICAL ABILITY TESTING:**

**Saturday, October 2 – Sunday, October 3, 2021;**

City of Columbia Fire Training Academy

700 Big Bear Boulevard, Columbia, Missouri 65202

Only those who have complied with all requirements and meet all qualifications as listed on the job announcement will be invited to the physical ability testing.

**II. INTERVIEW Monday, October 4 – Friday, October 8, 2021;**

City of Columbia Fire Training Academy

700 Big Bear Boulevard, Columbia, Missouri 65202

Only applicants who successfully pass the physical ability test will be invited to the interview.

**Backup dates if necessary are: To Be Determined**

**IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF FINAL ROSTER**

**V. INTERVIEW WITH FIRE CHIEF and Staff**

At the Fire Chief's option, as openings occur, prior to hiring.

Columbia, Missouri  
**Fire Department**

**Firefighter Physical Ability Examination**

**Applicant Study Guide**



**INTRODUCTION**

This study guide is designed to describe the physical tasks you will be required to perform for the Columbia, Missouri Firefighter Physical Ability Examination. However, this is merely a guide and may not exactly describe the testing process. You will increase your chances of obtaining a passing score if you spend some time preparing for the test. This includes thoroughly reviewing this study guide, following the specific directions regarding attire, paying proper attention to your physical well-being before the test, and taking care to avoid becoming overly anxious about the test.

**OVERVIEW OF THE TESTING PROCESS**

A job analysis of firefighters in the Columbia Fire Department revealed they perform certain essential or important physical functions, which are vital to their job duties. Many essential functions identified from this job analysis are included in the physical ability examination described below. Firefighting personnel from Columbia also confirmed that these functions included in the physical ability test were job-related, and essential for successful performance as a Columbia firefighter.

Among other physical tasks, firefighters in Columbia must be able to climb ladders, drag hoses, drag victims to safety, carry equipment, and force entry into buildings. The Columbia Firefighter Physical Ability Examination measures job-related physical skills, similar to these which are necessary for successful performance as a Columbia firefighter. Only those skills which do not require training to become proficient are assessed.

This examination is equally valid for assessing the physical skills of applicants with firefighting experience and those without. For example, one portion of the test requires the applicant to drag a supply hose for about 75 feet. It is not necessary to have prior experience as a firefighter to possess the physical ability to drag a hose.

## **TEST PREPARATION**

The following suggestions should help you prepare yourself physically for the test:

- Avoid junk food and maintain a well-balanced diet for several days before the test.
- Avoid tranquilizers and stimulants such as caffeinated beverages; especially on the day of the test.
- Get a good night's sleep before the test.
- Do not drink a lot of liquids or eat a large meal before the test.
- Avoid alcohol several days prior to and especially on the day of the test.

On the day of testing, all applicants are required to wear:

### **Proper Attire:**

- Long pants (you will be wearing a weighted vest over your clothing)
- Closed toe shoes or boots providing support to the foot and ankle
- T-shirt with sleeves
- Other necessary equipment will be provided by The Columbia Fire Department

All clothing has the potential be soiled or damaged during the physical ability testing process

**PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE EXAMINATION IF YOU ARE NOT WEARING LONG PANTS (e.g., jeans, sweats). YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO USE ANY PERSONAL FIREFIGHTING GEAR.**

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE TEST**

An orientation will be given by a test administrator to all applicants prior to the actual examination. Applicants must fully understand what is expected of them before being allowed to take the test. All events must be performed safely and as designated.

The test is composed of the following events.

## *Untimed Events*

During the untimed events, applicants will wear, gloves, helmet and ladder safety belt. During the blind crawl exercise, applicants will also wear a darkened facemask and knee pads.

1. Aerial Climb The fire department's aerial apparatus will be extended 75 feet in the air at, an angle of 70 degrees. A safety line will be strung through the top rung of the ladder. Applicants will be tethered to the safety line using a ladder safety belt and will, upon instruction, ascend and descend the ladder **without stopping**. Applicants shall be considered to have reached the top of the ladder when they can place both hands on the top rung. Applicants will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete the aerial climb event.
2. Blind Crawl Applicants will be led to the entrance of a doorway where they will be handed a section of hose. With a darkened facemask covering the eyes, applicants must follow the hose to the other side of a dark room on their hands and knees. **Letting go of the hose will result in disqualification.** Maintaining a grip on the hose is important when fighting fires so one does not get lost in a smoky building. The Columbia Fire Department requires applicants to maintain a grip on the hose at all times. Applicants will be advised they may encounter obstacles along the way and if this happens, they are to maneuver around, over or under all obstacles. When applicants reach the other side of the darkened room, they will be instructed to remove the darkened mask.

## *Timed Events*

Applicants will only be permitted to participate in the timed sequence of events if they have successfully completed the untimed events. Applicants will wear the same equipment mentioned above (excluding the darkened facemask); however, applicants will also wear a weighted vest weighing approximately 45 lbs.

During the sequence of timed events, it is extremely important to pace yourself. Over-exerting yourself early in the test may reduce the amount of energy you have left for exercises at the end of the test, such as the victim rescue. **Applicants are not permitted to run during or between test components.** Applicants will be warned once if they are noticed running; subsequent occurrences shall result in disqualification. For components performed in the stair tower, applicants may ascend or descend more than one stair at a time, but it is not advised.

Efforts to better one's time by moving more quickly may have unintended consequences, should one fall down.

3. Hose Drag Once applicants have successfully completed the Blind Crawl, they will be required to put on a weighted vest and proceed to the timed sequence of events. Timing starts with this event; applicants are required to pull a 4 inch supply hose with a coupling attached a distance of 75 feet, then set it on the ground. The hose may be placed over a shoulder or grasped with both hands. (The hose will be pre-arranged on the ground in a similar pattern for each applicant.)
4. Equipment Carry Upon putting the supply hose down, candidates are to pick up and carry two medical kits (weighing approximately 30 lbs. each) a distance of 50 feet, then set them down at a marker.
5. Charged Hose Advance After putting the medical kits down, applicants are to pick up and advance a 1-3/4 inch charged line for a distance of 75 feet, then set the nozzle on the ground. The hose may be placed over a shoulder or grasped with both hands. (The hose will be pre-arranged on the ground in a similar pattern for each applicant.)
6. Forced Entry Simulation Upon placing the nozzle of the charged line down in the designated area, candidates are to walk a short distance and pick up a 6-pound sledge hammer, Using overhead blows on a Keiser Sled, the weighted slide will be moved ten inches.
7. Highrise Pack/ Stair Climb After completing the forced entry simulation, applicants are to walk a short distance, pick up a Columbia Fire Department highrise pack weighing approximately 57 lbs., and carry it up five flights of stairs to the top of the Department's interior training stair tower, then place the High rise pack in the designated area.
8. Hoist Equipment Upon dropping off the highrise pack, candidates are to go down one level of the training tower (to the 4th floor), then hoist a 50 foot section of 2-1/2" hose, keeping feet within the designated area, until the coupling reaches the height marked on the exterior of the tower (about 35 feet off the ground). The hose is then lowered back to the ground using a hand over hand method. The rope is not allowed to slide through the applicant's hands when lowering.

9. Victim Rescue When the candidate is finished hoisting the hose, candidates are to walk down the three flights of stairs, exit the training tower, then proceed to the Victim Rescue exercise. The applicant is to grab a dummy weighing approximately 160 pounds under the arms, then drag (not carry) the dummy while walking backwards a total distance of 75 feet. Timing stops when the dummy's feet completely cross the marked finish line.

Applicants able to complete the entire sequence of exercises successfully within a specified time of 5:58 will pass the timed portion of the test. In accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1991, a single cut-off score is used on the timed test for applicants of both genders and for all ethnicities.

#### Additional Information

1. The examination will be administered only as weather permits.
2. Before testing begins, conserve energy by sitting and waiting for your turn according to the specific directions given to you by the exam administrator. The examination is physically demanding and you will need your energy. You may want to stretch your muscles, but do not overexert yourself.<sup>3</sup>  
Firefighter's weighted vest, gloves and helmet, which are provided, shall be worn throughout the course of the examination. Applicants are required to wear closed toe shoes or boots with good support. A test monitor will be present to assist with any equipment adjustments.
4. The test begins with two untimed exercises. These are the Aerial Climb and the Blind Crawl. Applicants unable to successfully complete either of these exercises will not be allowed to continue with the testing process.

Applicants able to complete the entire sequence of exercises successfully within the specified amount of time pass the test. See the following page for a map detailing the sequence of exercises.

**THE CITY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO  
DISQUALIFY ANY APPLICANT DETERMINED  
TO BE IN NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE RULES  
AND REGULATIONS REGARDING THE TESTING  
PROCESS.**

**COLUMBIA, MISSOURI FIRE DEPARTMENT  
FIREFIGHTER PHYSICAL ABILITY EXAMINATION COURSE LAYOUT**

